

KITCHEN SINK
ENTERPRISE
\$1.25

ADVENTURES of CRYSTAL NIGHT



SHARON
RUDAHLL

AN OLD STORY

THIS IS THE **LAST** TIME WE'LL DRAG VERA TO VISIT GREAT-GREAT GRANDMA STRAUSS.

BUT I WANNA GO TO THE **FLOATER RINK** INSTEAD!!

LITTLE DARLING, MY **ONE RAY OF LIGHT!** MAY YOU NEVER LIVE TO SEE THE MISERY THESE OLD EYES RECALL...

THE **SAME OLD KIBBLE...**

TAKE IT EASY, HARRY, IN A COUPLE HOURS THE NEW LAWS GO INTO EFFECT, AND WE GET **FULL CONTROL OF THE CARTEL SEAT IN ROME!**

DON'T START WITH ME AGAIN!

NOVEMBER 9, 1938—A CLEAR, ICY NIGHT... MAMMA WAS JUST WARMING THE COMFORTER WHEN WE HEARD THE SCREAMS... FROM MY WINDOW WE WATCHED GANGS OF TOUGHS POUR DOWN THE NARROW GHETTO STREET, SMASHING WINDOWS, SETTING FIRES, BEATING UP ANYONE IN THEIR PATH... THE OLD LAUNDRESS DOWNSTAIRS TRIED TO GRAB BACK HER SHEETS—THEY POURED GASOLINE OVER HER AND SET IT AFLAME...

30,000 JEWS WERE ARRESTED THAT NIGHT... BEFORE, WE MADE DO, WE GOT BY, WE WAITED FOR THE MADNESS TO PASS... AFTER, WE WERE WITHOUT ILLUSIONS. IN THE MORNING, BROKEN GLASS GLITTERED ON THE STREETS. WE SPOKE OF IT AS "**KRISTALLNACHT**"—CRYSTAL NIGHT. PROMISE ME YOU'LL NEVER FORGET, VERA!

I REMEMBER GRANDMA! YOU TELL ME EVERY TIME!

ABIE & ME WERE THE ONLY ONES FROM OUR FAMILY TO MAKE IT TO THE NEW COUNTRY. HERE WE MET URI STRAUSS AND DEVELOPED THE STRAUSS CONSCIOUSNESS BOOST, WHICH MADE OUR CLAN THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL POWER IT IS TODAY—RIGHT UP THERE WITH OLD MONEY LIKE THE EST AND SYNANON CARTELS...

WE'RE READY TO TAKE THE OLD GIRL JUST AS SOON AS YOU I.D. THIS TAPE...

AIEEEEEEE!!

SENIOR RELIEF TERMINAL

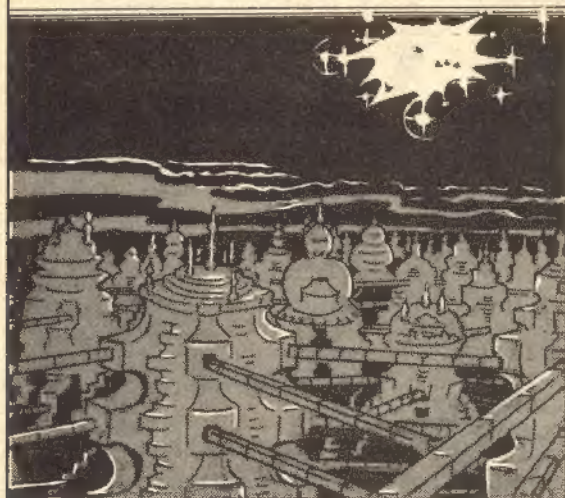
OUR PLEASURE!

THANK **CENTROBURO** THE STOCK PASSES TO US TODAY!

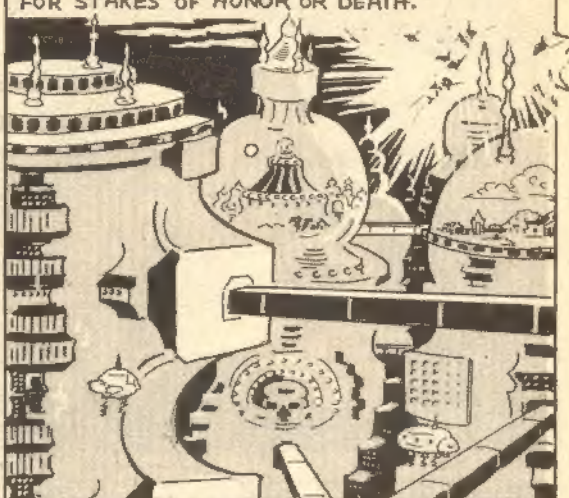
GRANDMA!!

SENIOR RELIEF TERMINAL

HIGH ABOVE THE MANY-LEVELLED CITY
STRETCHING FROM SEA TO SEA, BORED
ARISTOS CLASH IN RITUAL COMBAT...



PROGRAMMING THEIR LATE-MODEL FLOATERS
TO RANDOM COLLISION PATTERNS, THE CHILDREN
OF THE IDLE CENTROBURO HIERARCHY DUEL
FOR STAKES OF HONOR OR DEATH.



© SHARON KAHN RUDAHN PETERS

THE MAKING OF CRYSTAL NIGHT

WHILE FAR BELOW THE CASAS AND TERRACES, THE HANGING
DRUG GARDENS AND LOW GRAV FUN SPAS, IN THE
NOXIOUS DEPTHS OF THE TEEMING PEDESTRIAN BARRIO



ANOTHER LIFE IS BEGUN...





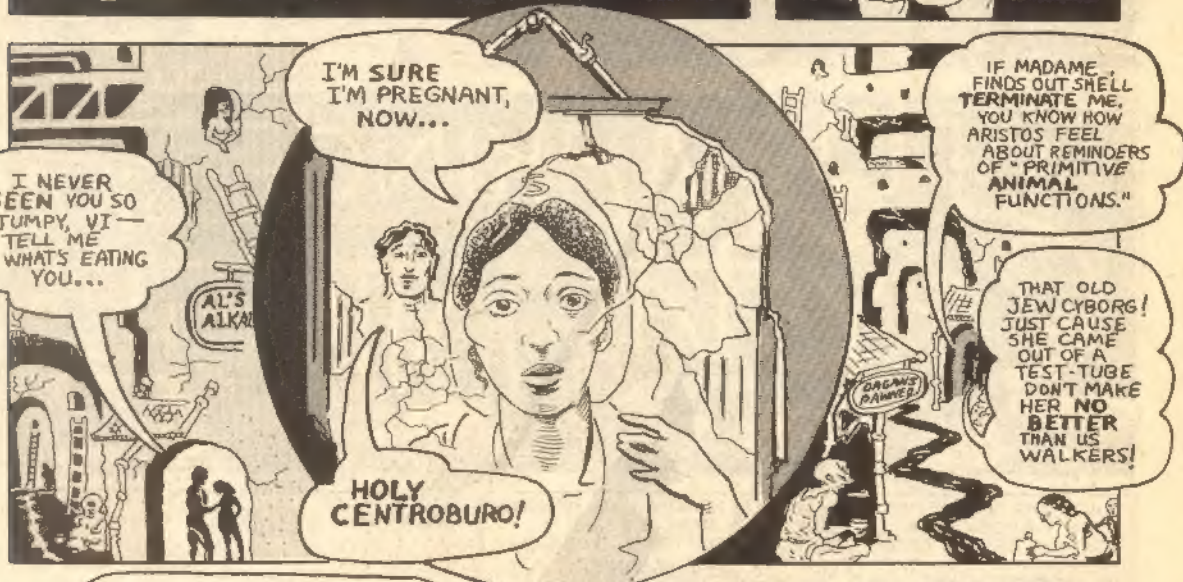
PHOOOOMMM

WHAT'S THAT?!
SCIENTOLOGISTS
GOT HOLD OF
THE POWER
SATELLITE
AGAIN?

AW, IT'S
JUST ANOTHER
PILE UP IN THE
FLOATER WARS...
COME BACK AND
WARM ME UP,
VITA, BABY.



I GOT TO GET
BACK UP TO TOWER
LEVELS — MADAME
MITSUBISHI- STRAUSS
NEEDS ME FOR THE
MORNING CONVOCATION.



I'M SURE
I'M PREGNANT,
NOW...

I NEVER
SEEN YOU SO
JUMPY, VI —
TELL ME
WHAT'S EATING
YOU...

AL'S ALKAL

HOLY
CENTROBURO!

IF MADAME
FINDS OUT SHE'LL
TERMINATE ME.
YOU KNOW HOW
ARISTOS FEEL
ABOUT REMINDERS
OF "PRIMITIVE
ANIMAL
FUNCTIONS."

THAT OLD
JEW CYBORG!
JUST CAUSE
SHE CAME
OUT OF A
TEST-TUBE
DON'T MAKE
HER NO
BETTER
THAN US
WALKERS!



STICK WITH ME, VITA!
WE'LL BRING IT UP HERE,
SOMEHOW...

YEAH, HOME SWEET HOME
WITH THE MUTES AND UNEMPLOYABLES...

NO MORE CENTROCREDITS, NO
PASS TO THRIFTY MEGAMALL, NO
LOTTERY NUMBERS IN THE FOOD GAME!
WE CAN WATCH OUR BABY
DIE SLOWLY OF GLASS PLAGUE
OR CARCINOGENIC DYSENTERY
IF IT DOESN'T GET STOLEN
FOR PARTS, FIRST!



I'M SORRY... I
KNOW YOU'D DO WHAT
YOU COULD TO STAND
BY ME, AMADOR...

YOU'D BETTER
GET BACK
TO WORK...

ON PENTHOUSE LEVEL IN CASA MITSUBISHI—STRAUSS, MADAME VERA ORDERS A SUITABLE TRIBUTE TO HER JUST-DECEASED PARTNER AT LASER MAHJONG.

YOU'D BETTER
RAISE THE INTELLIGENCE
SLIGHTLY
AND SUBSTITUTE
COLORING MORE
FLATTERING
TO MY OWN...

YES, LYDIA
ERHART-FULLER III,
TOTALLED IN
FLOATER COMBAT
IN LAST NIGHT'S
AUTO-DA-FE
ABOVE SECTOR
4G PASADENA
OFFRAMP...

DO YOU PREFER
IDENTICAL CLONING
OR ADVANCED
GENETIC ENGINEERING
OPTIONS, MADAME?

I DON'T HOLD
WITH FADS IN SELECTING
PROGENY, THANK YOU.

PREPARE THE IMPLANT
PROMPTLY AND PRESENT
THE HOST MOTHER
FOR MY APPROVAL.

WE'VE BEEN
GETTING LOTS OF
REQUESTS FOR
ALBINOS LATELY,
SINCE THE DOGE OF
ROME'S INVOLVEMENT
WITH THAT NEW
FEELIE ACTRESS,
MELLA TZANE.

TOWER MAINTENANCE
STAFF AWAITS YOUR
INSTRUCTIONS,
MADAME.

THE TERMINAL
HAS RECEIVED THE
MORNING'S
PROCLAMATION
FROM ROME,
MADAME.

WE HAVE THE
LATEST REPORTS ON YEAST
OPTIONS VARIABLES,
MADAME.

SHALL I
BRING YOUR
BREAKFAST TO
THE SOL ROOM,
MADAME?

THAT WILL
DO NICELY,
VITA.

YOU CAN BRING ME
THE TISSUE FUTURES
PRINTOUT NOW, KALIL...

SEE THAT NORTH WING
SECURITY IS BROUGHT UP
TO CODE — I'VE JUST
ORDERED A CLONE CHILD
AND WE'LL BE REBUILDING
THE NURSERY...

OHNNN!

CONGRATULATIONS,
MADAME!!

YOU'VE BEEN
MALFUNCTIONING
LATELY, VITA —
TOD MUCH TIME
WALLOWING IN
THE BARRIO,
I FEAR!

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE STILL HOPING I'LL APPLY FOR SERVANT PAPERS FOR YOUR MATE— BUT YOU MUST REALIZE EVEN IF THE CGP PASSED HIS GENE CODE, CENTROBURO WOULD NEVER OVERLOOK HIS RECORD.

HE REFUSED TO SERVE CENTROBURO— AND CENTROBURO NEVER FORGETS.

MINOR MEMBERS OF THE STRAUSS CLAN EXPRESS THEIR JOY AT MADAME VERA'S COMING BLESSED EVENT...

BUT AMADOR WAS ONLY 13 WHEN THEY RECRUITED HIM FOR THE FUN PALACES!

IT'LL SERVE THAT BITCH RIGHT TO GET WAITED OUT OF MY WILL!

CONGRATULATIONS, DARLING!

I'LL HAVE THREE OF THESE, AND FOUR OF THOSE— BUT WE'LL DO WITHOUT THE HOLOCORN.

IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAY— MADAME VERA HAS AN INFERIOR GENE CODE?

TALK IS HER DNA COMES MOSTLY FROM A KIKE GREAT GREAT GRANDMOTHER. THE OLD LADY HAD THE CONTROLLING SHARES AND SHE INSISTED... THE FAMILY WAS SO BIG IN CONSCIOUSNESS SPECULATION THEY KEPT IT OUT OF THE DATABANKS.

A TOUGH OLD BOX OUR MADAM IS, TOO!

MOST OF THESE ARISTOS WITH THEIR FANCY OPTIONS MIGHT AS WELL BE CGP PROMOTAPES FOR ALL THE FEELING YOU GET OUT OF THEM— BUT OUR MADAME, THERE'S A BIT OF WALKER HEART IN HER, AS WELL...

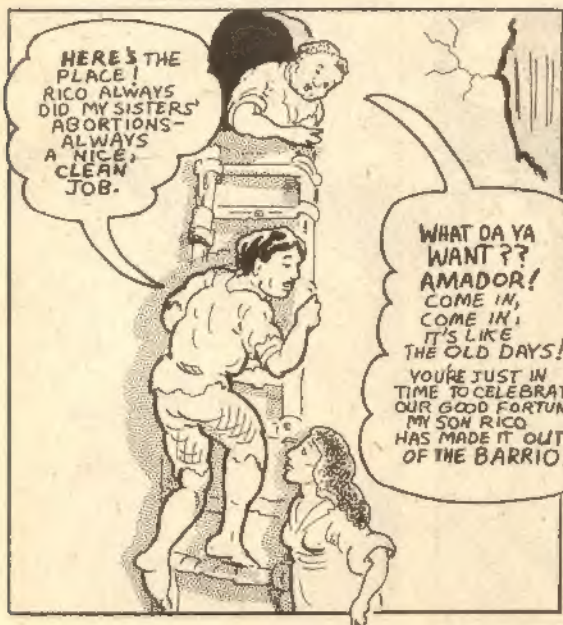
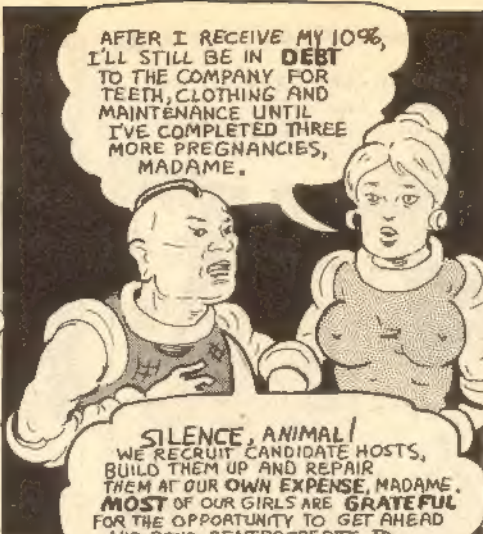
THE REPRESENTATIVE FROM FETAL FABRICANTS, MADAME...

I MUST SAY IT IS RATHER IRREGULAR FOR A CLIENT TO WITNESS THE PHYSICAL DETAILS OF PRODUCTION.

EXCUSE ME AS A HOPELESS RETROGRADE, BUT I CLING TO THE THEORY THAT A FEEBLE OR DISEASED HOST IMPAIRS DEVELOPMENT... AND I AM NOT EASILY REPELLED.

AS YOU SEE, I AM QUITE HEALTHY AND WHOLE, MADAME.

REGARDS AND FELICITATIONS, MADAME STRAUSS. HERE IS YOUR CONTRACT AND AS YOU REQUESTED...



TO THINK WE'VE LIVED
TO SEE **OUR SON**
LEAVE THE PEDS!

BUT WHAT ABOUT AIR SPACE
RENT AND ENERGY TAX TO
TO THE CONSCIOUSNESS
CARTEL?

IT'S TRULY
WONDERFUL
MRS. CARMELLI.

NOTHING IS **EASY**...
ARISTOS WE'RE NOT...
ONE STEP AT
A TIME...

HE MADE IT OUT
OF THE BARRIO,
TOWER LEVEL CAN'T
BE FAR BEHIND!

OF COURSE, THE FLOATER
CAN'T LAND IN THE BARRIO,
AND RICO CAN'T RENT
TOWER SPACE, SO WE
LEAVE SCRAPS FOR
HIM ON THE ROOF.

WAIT, JUST A
FEW MORE
MINUTES AND
YOU CAN WATCH
HIM PASS BY!

THEY'RE SO
PROUD, BUT
IT'S ABSOLUTELY
LOCO - FLYING
AROUND AND
AROUND WITH
NO PLACE
TO TOUCH
DOWN!

MAYBE RICO
WILL BE
LUCKY ENOUGH
TO TOTAL HIMSELF
IN FLOATER
COMBAT BEFORE
HE RUNS
OUT OF
FUEL!

AT LEAST
HE **ESCAPED**!

A **HERO**
TO US
ALL!

I **DO** LOVE
YOU SO...

JUST LIKE RICO, WE
FLOAT ON AND ON WITH
NO PLACE TO CALL HOME...

WHAT'S EATING YOU
CHILD? CADMIUM CRAMP
AGAIN? YOU'D BETTER
ASK MADAME FOR MORE
WATER STAMPS.

IT'S NOTHING...
PLEASE, DON'T
SAY ANYTHING
TO MADAME.

MONTHS OF FEARFUL
WAITING DRAG ON...

MUST YOU LOOK SO
AWFUL, VITA? YOU MAKE
ME APPRECIATE THE
FASHION FOR ANDROID STAFF.
I DO HOPE YOU'LL BE
FUNCTIONING FOR
TONIGHT'S PARTY.

A PRE-NATAL CELEBRATION
FOR LYDIA III'S CLONE! HOW
TYPICALLY ORIGINAL
OF YOU, DARLING!

ONE HOPES
YOU'VE HAD SOME
IMPROVEMENTS
MADE ON THE
ORIGINAL!

I EXPECT TO
BE TOO BUSY
TO ENTERTAIN
ONCE THE CHILD
ARRIVES - AT
LEAST FOR A
WEEK OR
TWO...

LIFE WILL BE BACK TO
NORMAL IN A FEW DAYS, YOU'LL
SEE - ONCE THE PROGRAMS
ARE ESTABLISHED AND THE
SERVANTS LEARN THE
NEW ROUTINE.

I'LL NEVER
FORGET MY FIRST
CLONECHILD! A LITTLE
DEMON PATTERNED
AFTER DOGE BRYANT -
WITH SENSORY AUGMENTATION,
OF COURSE. THE SERVOMECHS
WERE NEVER THE SAME!

WHAT IS THAT
HORRID NOISE?
NOT EXPERIMENTING
WITH LAST WAVE
AUDIO, ARE YOU?

OHhhh!!
OHhhh!!

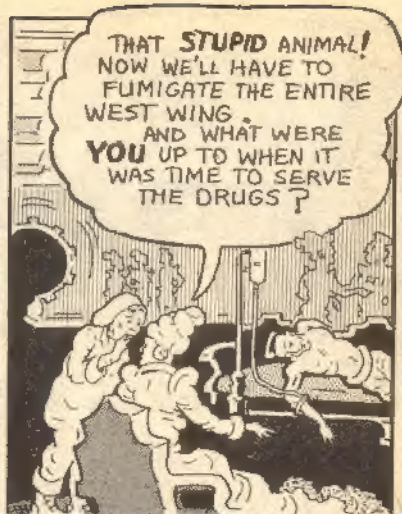
GO AND SEE
WHOS BELLOWING
IN THE SERVANTS WING
AND HAVE IT STOPPED
IMMEDIATELY.

SACRED
CENTROBURO!

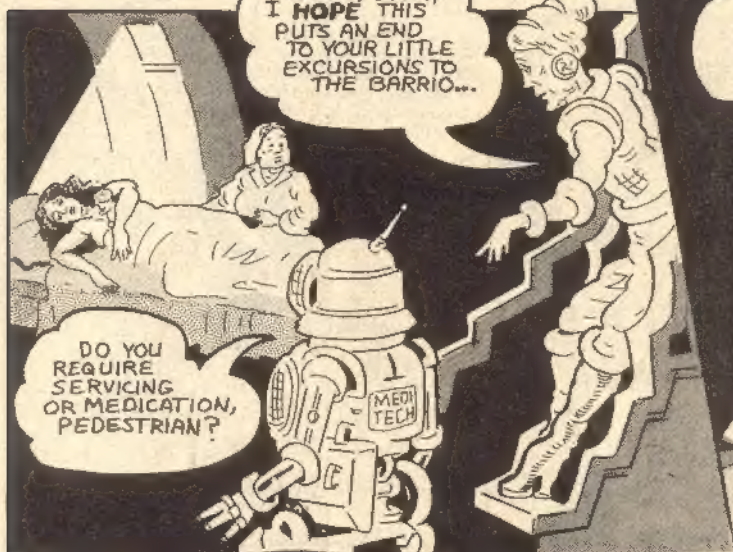


PLEASE, TELL
MADAME I PICKED
UP A DOSE OF
MEGA-COLI...
WE'LL BE ALRIGHT
NOW.

THERE'S NOT MUCH I
CAN DO FOR YOU - I'LL
BRING MORE FOOD AND WATER
AFTER THE PARTY...



THAT **STUPID** ANIMAL!
NOW WE'LL HAVE TO
FUMIGATE THE ENTIRE
WEST WING.
AND WHAT WERE
YOU UP TO WHEN IT
WAS TIME TO SERVE
THE DRUGS?

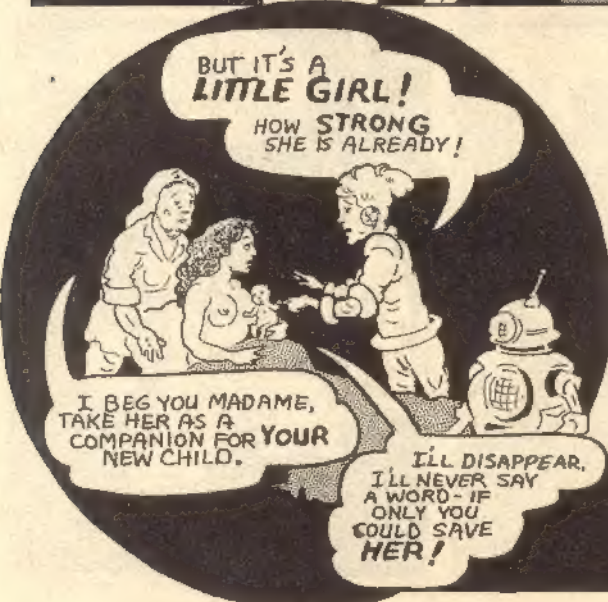


WELL, VITA,
I **HOPE** THIS
PUTS AN END
TO YOUR LITTLE
EXCURSIONS TO
THE BARRIO...

DO YOU
REQUIRE
SERVICING
OR MEDICATION,
PEDESTRIAN?



STAY BACK!
WE'LL BOTH DIE BEFORE
I GIVE HER UP TO THE CGP!

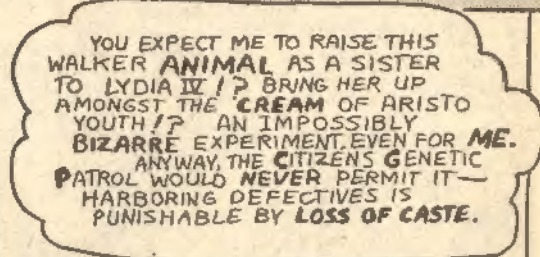


BUT IT'S A
LITTLE GIRL!

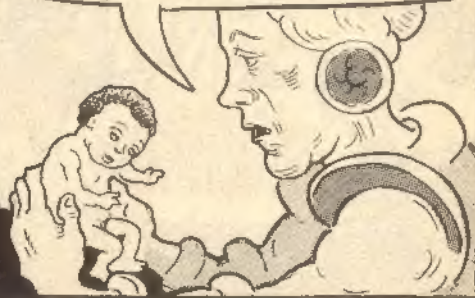
HOW **STRONG**
SHE IS ALREADY!

I BEG YOU MADAME,
TAKE HER AS A
COMPANION FOR YOUR
NEW CHILD.

I'LL DISAPPEAR.
I'LL NEVER SAY
A WORD - IF
ONLY YOU
COULD SAVE
HER!



YOU EXPECT ME TO RAISE THIS
WALKER ANIMAL AS A SISTER
TO LYDIA IV? BRING HER UP
AMONGST THE **CREAM** OF ARISTO
YOUTH? AN IMPOSSIBLY
BIZARRE EXPERIMENT EVEN FOR ME.
ANYWAY, THE **CITIZENS GENETIC**
PATROL WOULD NEVER PERMIT IT -
HARBORING DEFECTIVES IS
PUNISHABLE BY **LOSS OF CASTE.**



OH, MADAME, SURELY THE STRAUSS FAMILY IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO HAVE A FEW GENE CODES CHANGED IN THE DATABANKS?

THE CGP HAS LOOKED THE OTHER WAY FOR MORE THAN ONE ARISTO'S HALF CASTE.

BEFORE, WE THOUGHT OF OURSELVES AS NEIGHBORS, TEACHERS, GROCERS, WORKERS - GERMANS... AFTER KRISTALLNACHT, WE KNEW OUR FATE.

PROMISE ME, PROMISE ME YOU'LL NEVER FORGET, VERA!

IT WOULD BE A KINDNESS FOR YOUR GIRL TO HAVE A COMPANION...

I'LL SAVE YOUR CUB, VERA - WE CAN SERVICE IT AS EASILY AS THE CLONE CHILD, I SUPPOSE.

I'LL BLESS YOU WITH MY LAST BREATH, MADAME...

WHO KNOWS, PERHAPS YOU'LL LIVE TO SEE PUBTRANS OF HER RECEIVING A FLOATER LICENSE AT THE GRADUATION CEREMONIES IN ROME - OR WRITHING AT FUN PALACE NO-GRAY PREMIERES WITH THE LATEST FLOATER GANG WARLORD...

SHE'LL WEAR GENUINE POLYESTER!

SHE'LL HAVE HER CHANCE, AT LEAST...

IN THREE DAYS, YOU MUST BE BACK IN THE BARRIO, AND THE DATA BANKS WILL SHOW MY ACQUISITION OF TWO CLONE BABIES...

LYDIA ERHART FULLER IV, AUGMENTED, AND HER SISTER CRYSTAL NIGHT...



MADAME
LEVI-TOSHIBA...

GIGI, DARLING!

MINE
MINE!!

THAT WILL BE
ENOUGH, CRYSTAL!

VERA, IT'S BEEN
AGES! BUT WHAT A
DELICIOUS PAIR—ONE
SO DARK, ONE SO BLONDE.
THEY SET OFF YOUR
FLOOR MURALS
BEAUTIFULLY...

TAKE THIS
CREATURE
BACK TO THE
NURSERY
BUT LEAVE
DEAR LITTLE
LYDIA HERE,
WITH ME.

THAT DREADFUL
CHILD EATS
TWICE AS MUCH
AS LYDIA, GROWS
TWICE AS FAST
AND IS AT
LEAST FOUR
TIMES AS MUCH
TROUBLE!

WAAAAH

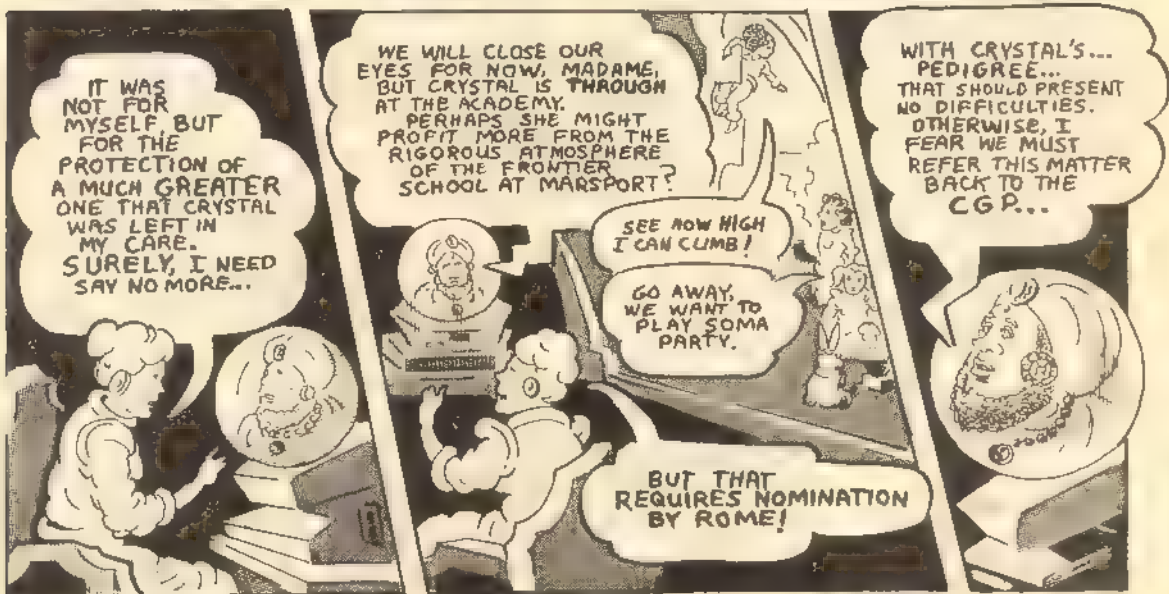
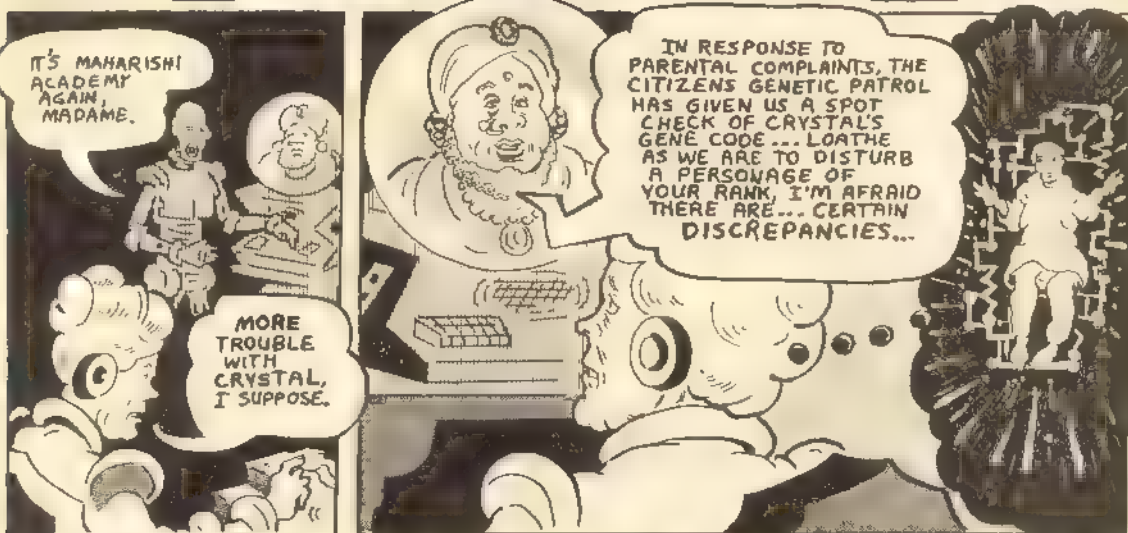
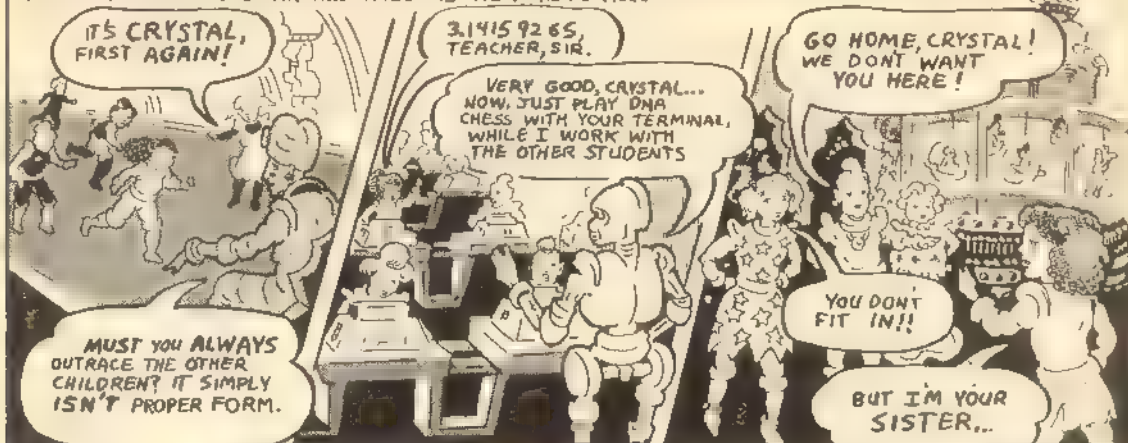
MOTHERHOOD HAS
SOFTENED YOU, VERA...
TELL ME,
IS THERE
ANYTHING TO
WHAT THEY
SAY ON THE
GOSSIP
TAPES?

SLEEP SAFELY
FOR NOW, WRETCHED
ONE... I KEEP
MY PROMISES...

SHE'LL BE A
STRONG, HEALTHY
DEVOTEE FOR
THE HIERARCHY.

THAT CRYSTAL IS A
NATURAL CHILD OF THE DOGE
OF ROME, LEFT IN MY CARE
AS A SOUVENIR OF OUR
OLD LIAISON? BUT GIGI, ONE
WORD TO ENCOURAGE SUCH
RUMORS WOULD BE GROUNDS
FOR TERMINATION BY THE CGP.

THE TWO SISTERS FLOURISH IN THE SUN OF PRIVILEGE, PAMPERED AND GROOMED TO TAKE THEIR PLACE AMONGST THE ELITE OF THE ARISTO HIERARCHY, LYDIA ERHART FULLER IV GROWS DELICATE AND WELL-BEHAVED AS THE SILICA IRISES CULTIVATED IN MADAME'S LABORATORY, WHILE CRYSTAL NIGHT PROVES AS DARK AND WILD AS HER HISTORY...



BELOW US, BILLIONS OF TEEMING WALKERS, BREEDING AND DYING IN OUR POISONOUS FUMES...

WHILE HERE ABOVE WE ARE FREE TO EXPAND OUR MINDS AND LIFESPANS EFFORTLESSLY—AND YET OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE USELESS KIBBLE...

WE HAVE PRODUCED NOTHING BUT FEEBLE BUREAUCRATS AND SUICIDAL FLOATER WARRIORS FOR GENERATIONS, IN SPITE OF ALL OUR MANIPULATIONS OF THE GENE CODE...

WHY HAVE YOU BROUGHT ME HERE TO MEET YOU, VERA? I'VE GROWN ADDICTED TO MY ISOLATION IN ROME...

ASTONISHING!

IT'S NOT MY STYLE TO DEMAND FAVORS, ARMANT... MAY I TELL YOU, IN CONFIDENCE, A SHOCKING AND HERETICAL STORY?

AND NOW... DO YOU HAVE A HOLO OF HER ON YOU?

ONLY IF YOU PROMISE TO POLISH OFF A BOTTLE OF VINTAGE ROOT BEER WITH ME AT THE SAME TIME — IT'S BEEN AGES SINCE ANYONE DARED TELL ME A GOOD STORY...

MUCH MORE DEVELOPED FOR HER AGE THAN OUR CLONE CHILDREN! DID I EVER TELL YOU I HAD A TASTE FOR VERY YOUNG GIRLS?

EASILY SATISFIED, I'M SURE...

YOU KNOW MARSPORT SCHOOL WAS DEVELOPED TO TRAIN POTENTIAL SCIENTIFIC AND MILITARY LEADERS...

BUT I'LL HELP CONTINUE YOUR EXPERIMENT, VERA. WITH PROPER TRAINING AND DISCIPLINE, CRYSTAL MAY BE OF SERVICE TO THE HIERARCHY...

IN RETURN, YOU MUST AGREE TO LEASE HER TO ME FOR SIX MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION... THAT SHOULD BE AMPLE TIME TO SATISFY MY CURIOSITY... AND TEMPER HER PRIDE...

ALTHOUGH SHE LONGS TO BREAK OUT OF THE CONFINEMENT OF HOME AND SCHOOL, CRYSTAL FINDS HER LEAVETAKING BITTERSWEET...

YOU WON'T MISS ME BOSSING YOU AROUND, WILL YOU, CRYSTAL?

YOU COULDN'T HELP IT, LYDY...

GOODBYE, MOTHER STRAUSS.

I EXPECT TO GET GOOD REPORTS ABOUT YOU, NOW!!

HARSH TRAINING CHALLENGES CRYSTAL'S ABILITIES AT LAST.

ALRIGHT, TAKE A TEN MINUTE BREAK, AND THEN BACK TO THE LABS TO ANALYSE YOUR SPECIMENS.

DISCOVERIES ARE SHARED AND TENTATIVE FEELINGS DEVELOPED...

NO, IT WORKS BETTER IF YOU WIRE IT THIS WAY, NILS.

GEE, CRYSTAL, I WISH YOU COULD ALWAYS HELP ME!

HOPES UTTERLY FOREIGN TO CITY-BOUND ARISTOS AWAKEN IN THE YOUNG MARS-PORT CADETS.

I'M GOING TO BE AN EXOBIOLOGIST WHEN I GROW UP, NILS, AND LEARN WHAT REALLY MAKES THESE CREATURES TICK.

LET'S FLY OUT TO THE STARS TOGETHER!

LOOK HOW BIG THIS ONE'S GROWN, AND HOW MUCH HARDER IT STRUGGLES THAN THE OTHERS!

SET IT FREE, CRYSTAL, NO ONE WILL KNOW!

IT WILL BE OUR PROMISE TO GO FREE OURSELVES ONE DAY...

AND TWICE A YEAR, THE EXCITEMENT AND FRUSTRATION OF VISITS HOME TO THE TOWERS AND CASA MITSUBISHI-STAUSS.

OH, CRYSTAL! YOU CAN'T WEAR THAT TO THE NULL-GRAY PLEASURE DOME OPENING! MARSPORT STYLES ARE LIGHT YEARS BEHIND!

THE STRAUSS CLAN WINTER SOLSTICE FETE, CRYSTAL'S LAST VACATION BEFORE HER FINAL TERM AT MARSPORT.

IT'S AGREED, THEN. 14:00 OVER SECTOR W2 SAN DIEGO OFFRAMP— SET CONTROLS TO RANDOM READ-OUT AND WATCH THE IONS FLY!

OOO! MEGATON MELTDOWN!

ASTROJOCT!

SYNAJAG!

IT'S GOOD ENOUGH FOR CRYSTAL— NONE OF OUR CROWD PAYS MUCH ATTENTION TO HER, ANYWAY.

JOINING ME FOR TOMORROW'S FLOATER WAR, LIDY, SWEET?

WOULD I CONNECT WITH A MUTE LIKE YOU?

WHAT ABOUT YOU, CRYSTAL? UNCLE CAME THROUGH WITH AN ALPHA CENTAURI XKE FOR GRADUATION— ALL BLACK WITH RHODIUM INSIGNIA!

AFRAID I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO SCHOOL IN THE MORNING...

YOU'RE NO FOOL, CRYSTAL! WHY TOTAL YOURSELF IN HYPERSPACE FOR STUPID GAME POINTS, WHEN THERE'S MUCH BETTER FUN TO BE HAD...

WE'RE GETTING TOGETHER A GROUP TO GO SMASHING IN THE SECTOR B BARRIO TONIGHT.

WHAT IN THE NAME OF CENTROBURO DO YOU MEAN, VID?

AW, YOU MUST HAVE HEARD ABOUT US— THE DOUBLE HELIX GANG. THE CGP TURNS A BLIND EYE, EVEN LETS US GET HOLD OF SURPLUS TACTICAL DEVICES SOMETIMES. WE TORCH A FEW SHACKS, TEASE THE ANIMALS... ELIMINATE SOME BAD GENES...

YOU'RE JUST THE TYPE— YOU DON'T KNOW HOW GOOD IT FEELS TO SMASH! CONNECT IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND...

THOSE CYBORG KIDS!
KILLING THEMSELVES IN
FLOATER COMBAT,
TORTURING HELPLESS
PEDS!!

I'VE CHANGED SO
MUCH SINCE WE WERE
CHILDREN... I KNOW
YOU DON'T BELIEVE
ME, CRYSTAL.

WE'VE BOTH CHANGED—
TELL ME ABOUT
IT...

PROMISE NOT TO
BREATHE A WORD—
IT'S TERRIBLY
ILLEGAL.

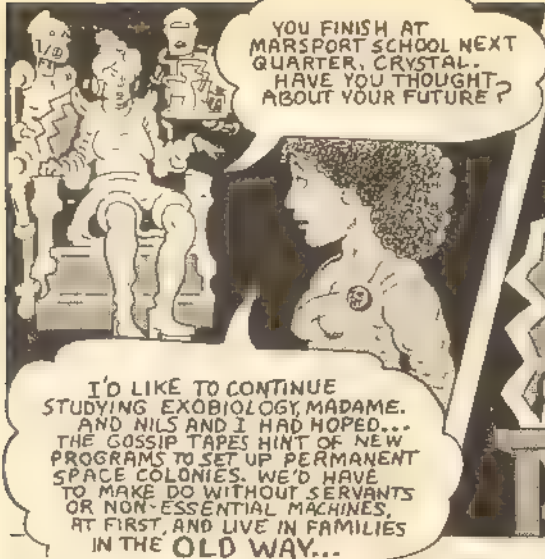
WE'VE ONLY BEEN MEETING A
FEW MONTHS, BUT ALREADY WE'RE
BEING WATCHED BY THE CGP. WE
COLLECT GENE CATALOGS AND DENTAL
FLOSS TO DISTRIBUTE TO THE PEDS—
OH, AND WE HAVE SUCH WONDERFUL
DISCUSSIONS!

SOMEONE HAS TO HELP THOSE
POOR PEOPLE—THEY ARE
PEOPLE, CRYSTAL, EVEN THO THEY
DIDN'T COME OUT OF TEST
TUBES! IT'S GIVEN SO
MUCH MEANING TO
MY LIFE...

OF COURSE,
I UNDERSTAND
LYDIA...

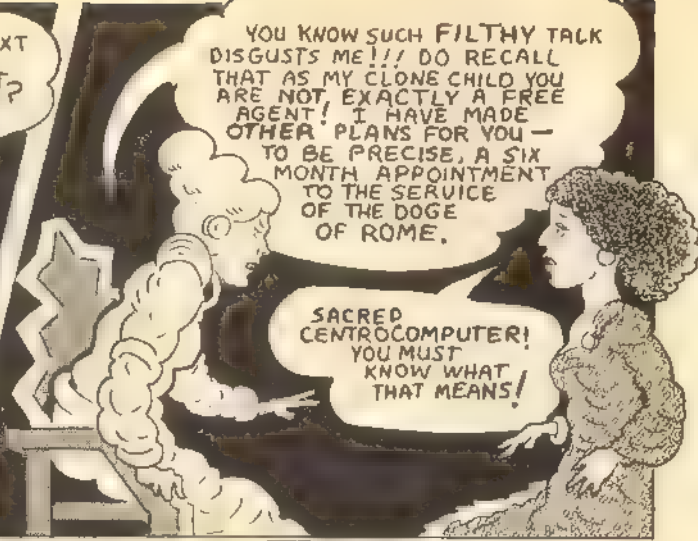
CRYSTAL!!

MOTHER'S
CALLING...



YOU FINISH AT
MARSPORT SCHOOL NEXT
QUARTER, CRYSTAL.
HAVE YOU THOUGHT
ABOUT YOUR FUTURE?

I'D LIKE TO CONTINUE
STUDYING EXO BIOLOGY, MADAME.
AND NILS AND I HAD HOPED...
THE GOSSIP TAPES HINT OF NEW
PROGRAMS TO SET UP PERMANENT
SPACE COLONIES. WE'D HAVE
TO MAKE DO WITHOUT SERVANTS
OR NON-ESSENTIAL MACHINES,
AT FIRST, AND LIVE IN FAMILIES
IN THE OLD WAY...



YOU KNOW SUCH FILTHY TALK
DISGUSTS ME!!! DO RECALL
THAT AS MY CLONE CHILD YOU
ARE NOT EXACTLY A FREE
AGENT! I HAVE MADE
OTHER PLANS FOR YOU -
TO BE PRECISE, A SIX
MONTH APPOINTMENT
TO THE SERVICE
OF THE DOGE
OF ROME.

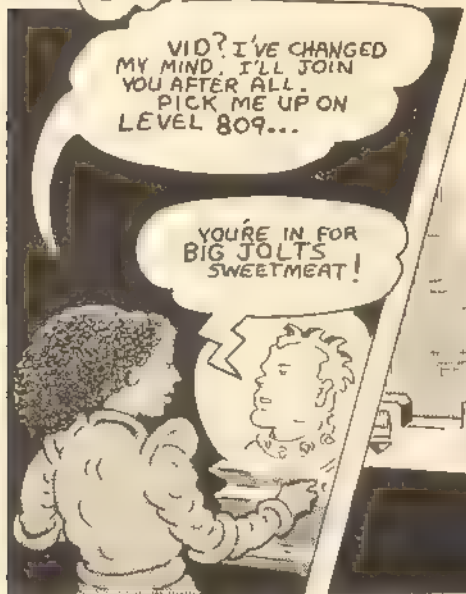
SACRED
CENTROCOMPUTER!
YOU MUST
KNOW WHAT
THAT MEANS!



IT IS AN HONOR TO
ONE'S CLAN TO BE USED
IN ANY CAPACITY
BY THE HIERARCHS
OF ROME.
I'LL LISTEN TO
NO MORE OF THIS
HERESY!
APPARENTLY YOUR
STAY AT MARSPORT
DID NOTHING FOR YOU!



PERHAPS I SHOULD
CANCEL YOUR LAST
TERM AND
SEND YOU TO
ROME DIRECTLY.
NOW LEAVE ME -
AND BEHAVE YOURSELF
LIKE AN ARISTO
FOR A CHANGE.



VID? I'VE CHANGED
MY MIND. I'LL JOIN
YOU AFTER ALL.
PICK ME UP ON
LEVEL 809...

YOU'RE IN FOR
BIG JOLTS
SWEETMEAT!



OH NO! THE DOUBLE
HELIK GANG!

QUICK, RUN!

GOT THIS
ONE, VID!

LET'S SEE HOW
YOU LIKE SOME
GOOD GENES,
ANIMAL!

WATCH THIS MUTE
GO UP!

HURRY,
AFTER THOSE
FUN BOYS!

NUMB WITH HORROR AND DISGUST,
CRYSTAL BECOMES SEPARATED
FROM THE GANG...

HOW COULD
I HAVE KNOWN
IT WAS LIKE THIS?
THEY ALWAYS
LOOKED SO
CONTENTED ON
THE TRANSMISSIONS...

CRYSTAL!
CRYSTAL 'NIGHT!

COME, COME INSIDE,
QUICKLY, BEFORE
THEY SEE US!

BUT HOW DO YOU
KNOW MY NAME?

COME ON,
FOLLOW ME!

LOOK INTO THIS
HOLO!



WHY, IT'S ME!
IT'S YOU?!
I DON'T UNDERSTAND...

MYSELF AS A YOUNG
GIRL, WORKING FOR
MADAME STAUSS...



HERE IS OLD NYLON
SHE HANDED DOWN TO ME —
SEE, WITH THE IRIS
INSIGNIA!



LOOK, LOOK AT
OUR FACES IN THE
MIRROR. YOU MUST
SEE...

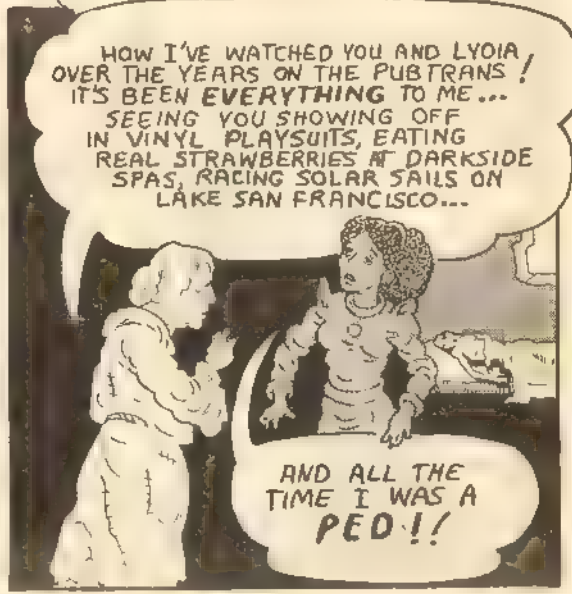


I AM
YOUR REAL
MOTHER!



IT CAN'T BE!
BUT I WAS
ALWAYS DIFFERENT...

OF COURSE YOU'RE
DIFFERENT THAN THE CLONE
CHILDREN — BUT I KNOW
YOU CAN BE BETTER
AND STRONGER.



HOW I'VE WATCHED YOU AND LYDIA
OVER THE YEARS ON THE PUBTRANS!
IT'S BEEN EVERYTHING TO ME...
SEEING YOU SHOWING OFF
IN VINYL PLAYSUITS, EATING
REAL STRAWBERRIES AT DARKSIDE
SPAS, RACING SOLAR SAILS ON
LAKE SAN FRANCISCO...

AND ALL THE
TIME I WAS A
PED!!

YOU ARE THE
CHILD OF OUR
LOVE...
COME OVER
TO THE MAT.



MY FATHER?



HE'S DYING
AT LAST...

HE LEASED HIS KIDNEYS
TO BUY AN AIR FILTER FOR
ME - MY LUNGS NEVER WERE
STRONG... OUR LIVES HAVE
BEEN HARD SINCE I LEFT
MADAME, BUT IT'S WORTH
EVERYTHING
TO SEE YOU.



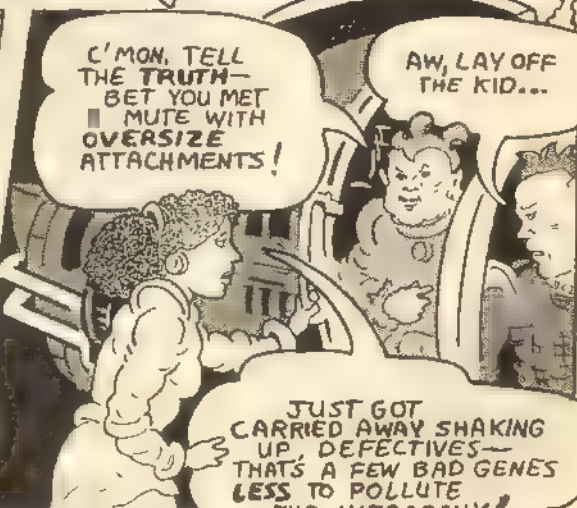
FATHER!

IT CAN'T
BE TRUE -
IT'S SOME
PED TRICK
TO GET CREDITS
OUT OF ME -
I CAN'T
BE AN
ANIMAL!



HEY, CRY!!
THOUGHT
WE LOST
YOU FOR
A WHILE THERE!

C'MON, TELL
THE TRUTH -
BET YOU MET
■ MUTE WITH
OVERSIZE
ATTACHMENTS!



AW, LAY OFF
THE KID...

JUST GOT
CARRIED AWAY SHAKING
UP DEFECTIVES -
THAT'S A FEW BAD GENES
LESS TO POLLUTE
THE HIERARCHY!



ADVANCED KRELL
EXO BIOLOGY



SO YOU'RE
BACK AT
LAST!

BUT WHERE IN THE CITY IS
YOUR SISTER LYDIA
AT THIS HOUR?

MY GOOD SISTER
LYDIA?! MY PERFECT
ARISTO SISTER?

WHAT ARE
YOU BABBLING
ABOUT, CRYSTAL?

I'VE JUST FIGURED
OUT A FEW THINGS,
MADAME... I'M
READY TO ASSUME
MY RESPONSIBILITIES.

I ASSURE YOU I WILL
NEVER BE ANY TROUBLE
TO YOU AGAIN - I'M
READY, WHENEVER
YOU CHOOSE, TO
GO TO ROME...

YOU MAY
AS WELL
GRADUATE,
IN THAT
CASE.
WE'LL
DISCUSS IT
AT MORNING
CONVOCATION.

A VIGILANT ARISTO
IS A HIGH
GENE CODE
ARISTO—

WHAT DO
YOU HAVE TO
INFORM US,
CITIZEN?

I WANT
TO REPORT
HERETICAL
ANTI-
CENTROBURO
ACTIVITY...

LYDIA IV
MITSUBISHI- STRAUSS,
PRO-PED AGITATION
COMMITTEE -
HOLD ON, AND I'LL
GIVE YOU THE EXACT
COORDINATES OF
THEIR MEETING...

ATTENTION ALL
PEDESTRIANS!!
PUBLIC TRI-D
TRANSMISSION!

ATTENTION!!
PUBLIC TRI-D
TRANSMISSION!!

WONDER WHAT
THOSE ARISTO CYBORGS
ARE GOING TO
STICK US WITH
THIS TIME?

GET YER USED
ORGANS CHEAP HERE!
REPLACEMENT PARTS
RECONDITIONED-
CENTRO CREDITS
OR TRADE IN!

WHATEVER THEY
SAY, THINGS
WILL ONLY
GET WORSE.

SPARE CREDITS
FOR A WASHED UP
FUN PALACE VET,
HONORED SIRS?

URI
GELLE
LIVES

PSST, BUDDY,
I GOT SOME
BOSS ANTI-
CARCINOGEN-
HARDLY
STEPPED ON,
AT ALL!

TWILIGHT OF THE HIERARCHY

TODAY CARTEL CONVOCATION
AT CENTROBUREAU CENTRAL,
ROME, ANNOUNCES THE
ACCEPTANCE OF SECTOR FOUR
MINISTER CRYSTAL NIGHTS
PEDESTRIAN IMMIGRATION
PROGRAM.

THE RIGHT
HONORABLE REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SYNANON CARTEL
WILL SPEAK.

FELLOW CITIZENS OF THIS
GREAT CITY, ARISTO AND PEDESTRIAN
ALIKE, TODAY WE HAVE TAKEN A GREAT
LURCH FORWARD. THE CITY'S SURPLUS
ABLE-BODIED POPULATION, LONG SUFFERING
IN IDLENESS AND DEPRIVATION WILL
FIND A PRODUCTIVE FUTURE AT LAST.

HONED BY RIGOROUS TRAINING AT MARSPORT, HARDENED BY HER SERVICE IN ROME, CRYSTAL HAS USED HER GOOD CREDIT WITH THE CGP AND THE WORLD-WIDE RESOURCES OF THE STRAUSS CARTEL TO MAKE HER WAY QUICKLY THROUGH THE RANKS OF THE CENTROBULO HIERARCHY. STILL A YOUNG WOMAN WITHOUT THE USE OF RECONDITIONING TECHNIQUES, CRYSTAL HAS ALREADY GAINED A REPUTATION AS THE MOST CLEAR-EYED AND PRAGMATIC OF BUREAUCRATS...



MINISTER NIGHT!

FROM MY EARLIEST STUDENT DAYS AT MARSPORT I'VE DREAMED OF OPENING OUR SPACE TERRITORIES TO PERMANENT COLONIES.

NOW THAT THE MOONS OF CALLISTO AND DEIMOS ARE AT LAST TERRAFORMED FOR HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, WE SHALL INSTITUTE MASS TRANSIT BY LOTTERY, FOR ABLE-BODIED PEDESTRIANS.



WHILE THIS IMMIGRATION DIRECTIVE WILL DO NOTHING TO RELIEVE THE PLIGHT OF MUTANTS, DEFECTIVES... OR OVERWORKED ARISTO BUREAUCRATS



HA HA!

HAR, HAR, HAR!

SOUNDS LIKE THEY GOT A NEW ANGLE THIS TIME.

TOO MANY OF US HERE FOR COMFORT, SO THEY CART US OFF SOMEPLACE ELSE... JUST MORE OF THE SAME OLD KIBBLE.

WE HOPE IT WILL BE A MAJOR STEP IN FREEING NEEDED RESOURCES AND EASING THE PROBLEMS OF THE OVERCROWDED WALKER BARRIOS.



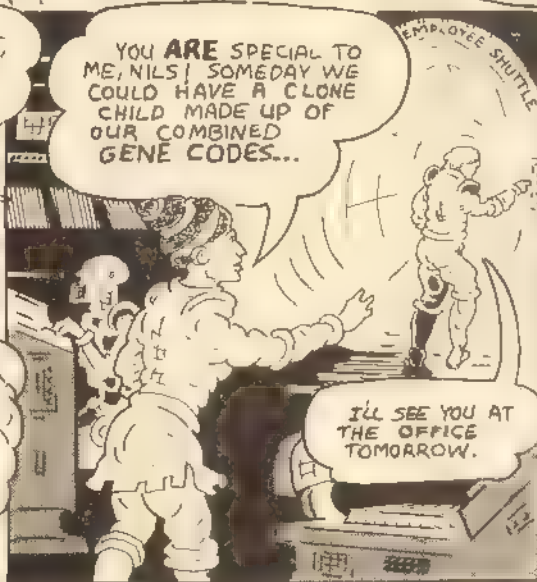
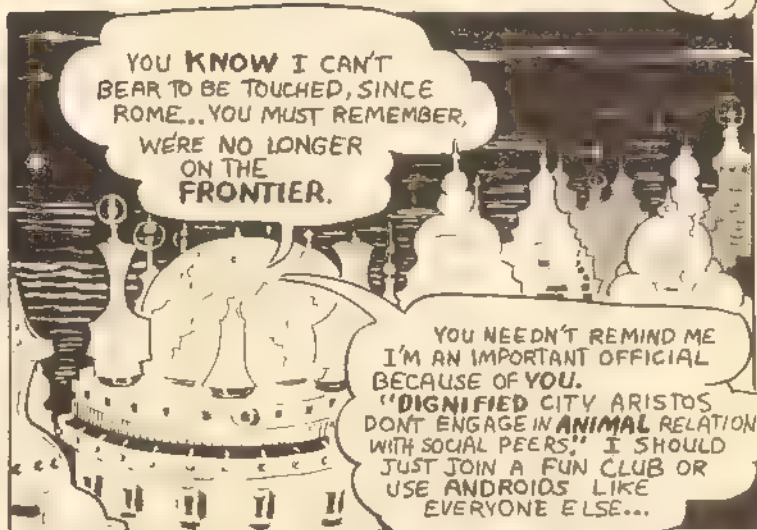
HEAR, HEAR!

ARE YOU KIDDING? IT'S A LOTTERY TO THE STARS!

I WON'T PASS UP A CHANCE LIKE THIS, FELLOW PED.



WELL, IT'S GOT TO BE BETTER THAN THIS PLACE.



TOP GRADE
REPORTS COMING
IN ON YOUR
IMMIGRATION
PROGRAM,
MINISTER,
NIGHT!

RESOURCES
CONSUMPTION
DOWN REDUCED
RESTLESSNESS
AND INCIDENCE
OF TERNAL
CRIME IN
THE BARRIOS.

INCREASED
COMPLIANCE
WITH
CENTROBURO
AUTHORITY.

GOOD,
GOOD...

BUT WHY DO WE GET SUCH
CRYPTIC TRANSMISSIONS FROM THE
COLONIES?... "SECOND IMMIGRATION
QUOTA COMPLETED AS SCHEDULED,
WORK INCENTIVE PROGRAM PROCEEDING!!
THEY SHOULD BE COMPLETING
SHOPPING MALLS AND CONDOMINIUMS
BY NOW - WHY DOESN'T CENTROBURO
CENTRAL SEND ON ANY VISUALS OR
INTERVIEWS?

OVERRIDE, OVERRIDE!
PRIORITY TRANSMISSION-
PRIORITY OVERRIDE-
SECURITY CODE
TRANSMISSION FROM
THE OFFICE OF
THE DOGE
OF ROME.

CRYSTAL I MUST
CONGRATULATE YOU ON THAT
IMMIGRATION SCHEME. A
FANTASTIC COUP!
IT'S ENOUGH TO 'MAKE
ME BELIEVE THE GOSSIP
THAT I FATHERED YOU!


PLEASE DON'T
TRY TO DISGUST
ME WITH FILTHY
TALK, ARMANT, I'M
BEYOND THAT.
IF YOU HAVE
OFFICIAL BUSINESS,
COMMUNICATE
THROUGH MY
SECRETARY.

I HAD WANTED
TO LET YOU IN ON
SOME TOP SECRET
RUMORS OF ALIEN
ACTIVITY- WE'VE
BEEN GETTING THE
MOST INTRIGUING
STATIC FROM
BEYOND JUPITER...

BUT SINCE
YOU'RE SO
BUSY, LET
ME JUST SHOW
YOU A MEMENTO
I COMMISSIONED
OF YOUR SERVICE
IN ROME...

AS YOU SEE, I
SPARED NO EXPENSE TO
GET THE FINEST HOLO
SCULPTOR NOT YET
BLACKLISTED BY THE CGP-
A LIMITED CHOICE, TO
BE SURE...

TRANSMISSION
TERMINATED.



ABOVE OUR SLUMS ARISTOS FLY,
BELOW IN THE FUMES, PEDS CHOKE AND DIE;
CRUSHED BENEATH THEIR FEET,
CARVED AND SOLD LIKE MEAT,
BECAUSE IT MUST BE SO,
FOR THE GOOD OF ALL, THEY SAY.
THE RICH MUST STAY RICH
THE POOR MUST PRAY,
UNTIL WE BREAK FREE SOME DAY.

HEY, MAMA, THOSE BOYS
ARE SINGING 'THE SONG
OF THE PEDS' AGAIN!

DON'T MEAN NOTHING,
THEY'RE ALL TOO WEAK
AND SICKLY TO MAKE
ANY TROUBLE.

BUT THAT
CRYSTAL NIGHT—
SHE'S REALLY
DOING SOMETHING
FOR US WALKERS
AT LAST.

MY TWINS WENT OFF LAST FOUNDER'S
DAY— I KEEP GETTING THE NICEST
CENTROFORM TRANSMISSIONS. SEEMS
THEY'RE BUILDING DUPLEXES AND
PUTTING IN THE CROPS... I SURE WOULD
LOVE TO GET JUST A CARD OR
SOMETHING FROM THE KIDS' OWN
HANDS, THO, BUT I GUESS THEY
KEEP 'EM REAL BUSY...

I GET THOSE
SAME TRANSMISSIONS,
FROM BROTHER ELV!

IT SURE MUST BE
FINE ON THE COLONIES—
AIR AND WATER TO BURN,
FOOD GROWING RIGHT
OUT OF THE GROUND!

NO SULFUR RAIN
CORRODING THE
BABIES' EYES...

HOW I WISH I COULD
HAVE GIVEN YOU LIFE
ON THE OUTER WORLDS,
LITTLE ONE!

AW, SHE'LL RUN OFF TO
THE COLONIES SOON ENOUGH,
ONCE SHE'S GROWN...

SPECIALLY WITH
ALL THE STRONG
ABLE MEN
CLEARING OUT
OF HERE!

A BRUNCH DANSANT AT CASA STRAUSS
TO HONOR MADAME VERA'S 25TH
RECONDITIONING...

EVERYWHERE I GO
THESE DAYS THERE'S TALK
OF WHAT A GREAT HEROINE
YOU ARE TO OUR
POOR PEDESTRIANS,
CRYSTAL, DEAR.

I TRY TO SERVE
THE CITY'S INTERESTS
AS BEST I CAN,
MADAME KENNEDY-PAHLEVI.

HOW LIKE MY SISTER
CRYSTAL, TO DO SO MUCH
FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD.
I'M AFRAID I MUST
RETIRE TO MY WING, NOW-
COMPANY TIRES ME
SO QUICKLY...

CENTROBURO IS
VERY PLEASED
AT THE SAVINGS IN
RESOURCES AND
CIVIL ORDER...

YOU KNOW HOW LYDIA'S
BEEN EVER SINCE THAT
RUN-IN WITH THE CGP-
SHE'S JUST NOT
THE SAME GIRL...

THOSE BEASTLY SPOILED CHILDREN,
RISKING NOBLE FAMILY REPUTATIONS
OVER SUCH KIBBLE!! SECRET AID
FOR THE PEDS, INDEED! IT'S LUCKY
SHE WAS STOPPED BEFORE
IT WENT FURTHER.
PERHAPS HERS WAS NEVER A
REALLY GOOD GENE CODE...WE MUST
MAKE ALLOWANCES FOR YOUR SISTER...

COME AGAIN,
SOON. WE ARE
SO PROUD OF
YOU, CRYSTAL.

BUT THE RE-EDUCATION
WORKSHOP FOR A FIRST OFFENDER
OF HER CATEGORY IS A STANDING
JOKE~ A FEW FEELIES OF
CASTE CRACK-UPS! I NEVER
DREAMED SHE'D TAKE IT
SO HARD...

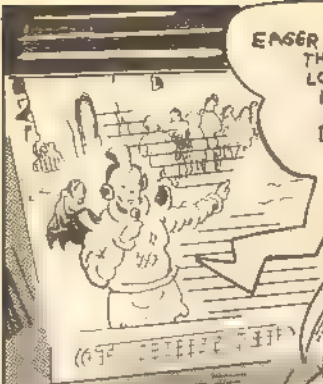
OF COURSE, MADAME.
I REGRET I MUST
FLOAT BACK TO
THE OFFICE, NOW.

CENTRO
BURO
CENTRAL
ROME

FANTASTIC! WE'RE ELIMINATING
SURPLUS POPULATION, MINING THE MOONS,
AND KEEPING PEACE IN THE BARRIOS
AT THE SAME TIME!!

AUTHORIZE CENTROCREDIT
TO LAUNCH THE NEXT IMMIGRATION
FLEET~ WE'LL FLOAT A DNA
ISSUE, IF NECESSARY...

MORE READOUT ON THE
CALLISTO AND DEIMOS
COLONIES, REVERED SIR.
THE TERMINATION
RATE IS RUNNING
NEAR 80%.



EAGER PEDESTRIANS WAITED IN LINE
THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT TO RECEIVE
LOTTERY TICKETS FOR THE NEW
IMMIGRATION FLEET. LUCKY
NUMBERS WERE REPORTEDLY
BEING TRADED FOR DRUGSTAMPS.

BUT WHY, WHY DO I
GET NO SENSORY READOUT?
WHY ONLY THESE MUTE
FORM REPORTS?

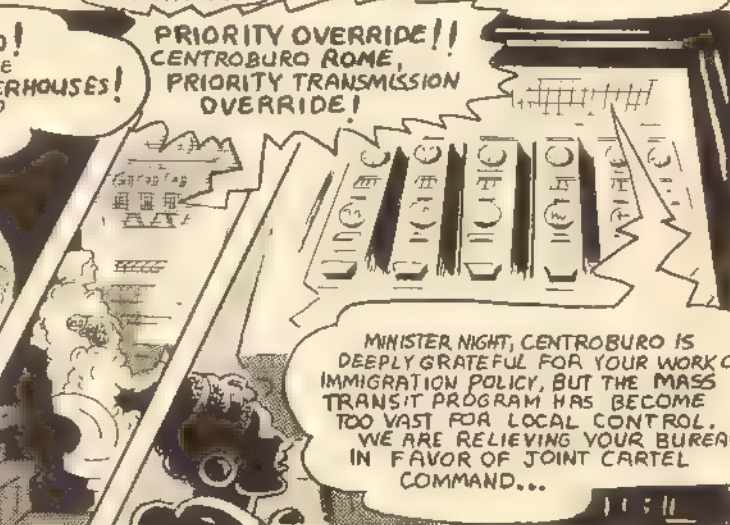
CRYSTAL, THESE
JUST CAME
BACK, DECODED
THROUGH CENTRAL
COMPUTER — I
WASN'T SURE WHAT
WE HAD UNTIL I
FILTERED OUT
SOME WEIRD
JAMMING
PATTERNS.

I TOOK THE LIBERTY
OF SENDING A PROBE
OUT BEYOND SATURN TO
GET TELETRANSMISSIONS
DIRECTLY FROM THE
COLONIES — FORGED
YOUR REQUISITION CODE
TO GET THE SHIP
FROM ROME...

YOU WHAT?!
BUT THEY'VE BEEN
DIVERTING ALL THIS
DATA BEFORE IT
REACHED US!!!

HOLY CENTROBURO!
NILS, THE COLONIES ARE
WALKER SLAUGHTERHOUSES!
PED WORKERS CRUSHED
IN HELLHOLE TITANIUM
MINES...

PRIORITY OVERRIDE!!
CENTROBURO ROME,
PRIORITY TRANSMISSION
OVERRIDE!



MINISTER NIGHT, CENTROBURO IS
DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR WORK ON
IMMIGRATION POLICY, BUT THE MASS
TRANSIT PROGRAM HAS BECOME
TOO VAST FOR LOCAL CONTROL.
WE ARE RELIEVING YOUR BUREAU
IN FAVOR OF JOINT CARTEL
COMMAND...

EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY, OPPOSITION
TO CARTEL IMMIGRATION POLICY
CONSTITUTES HIGH HERESY AND WILL
BE PUNISHED ACCORDINGLY.

WE CONGRATULATE YOU ON FINE
WORK, MINISTER NIGHT, AND AWARD YOU
TOWER LEVEL 4B AS TOKEN OF OUR
APPRECIATION... OVER AND OUT.

TRANSMISSION
TERMINATED.

NILS, WE'VE GOT TO GET
THROUGH TO THE PED AGITATION
COMMITTEES TO STOP THE
VOLUNTEERS!!

WE'VE GOT LOCATOR
TAGS ON ALL THE
RINGLEADERS, IN
OUR FILES...

WHILE IN THE COLD, STARRY REACHES OF
THE OUTER TERRITORIES ANOTHER WORK
PERIOD DRAWS TO A CLOSE...

LOST ANOTHER 80
PEDS ON THE WEST FORK
TODAY- BUT WE GOT A
SHITLOAD OF HIGH GRADE
SELENIUM.

GUESS IT'S TIME TO
SEND IN ANOTHER
PROGRESS REPORT-
HOLY MOTHER OF
TEST TUBES!!

WHAT'S
THAT?!?

I'VE GOTTEN
THROUGH TO HALF
A DOZEN PED
LEADERS, BUT THERE'S
NO WAY WE CAN
REACH ALL THE
VOLUNTEERS IN
TIME...

WE'LL DO IT IF
I HAVE TO CANVASS
THE BARRIO ON
FOOT MYSELF.

**VERRIDE!!
VERRIDE!!**

PRIORITY AAA ALERT!
SIMULTANEOUS BLACKOUT
OF MARTIAN AND JOVIAN BASES-
PROBABILITY OF ALIEN
ATTACK 43%. REPEAT:
PROBABLE ALIEN ATTACK!

HIERARCHY FORCES ARE
MAKING A STRATEGIC WITHDRAWAL
IN THE FACE OF DISTURBANCES
OF UNKNOWN ORIGIN...

LOOK, THERE'S A
DARK SHAPE CUTTING
US OFF FROM THE
REST OF THE FLEET!!

LIKE A BLACK LARVA,
EATING UP THE STARS...

IT'S HORRIBLE!
SHRIEKING IN MY
MIND!!

ATTENTION!
SEEK SHELTER!!
ALIEN ATTACK
AGAINST LUNA BASE!
ALL CITIZENS
PROCEED TO
SECTOR SHELTERS

EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE

HIERARCHY FORCES HAVE
FALLEN BACK TO DEFEND ANY
THREAT TO THE ALLIED
CITIES. ARISTOS ARE ADVISED
TO SEEK SHELTER IN BUNKER
LEVELS ACCORDING TO
CARTEL CASTE CODE.

WE MUST GET TO
THE SHELTERS,
LYOIA.

PLEASE, PLEASE,
DON'T MAKE ME
LEAVE HOME!

AS CITIZENS RALLY TO DEFEND
THE HIERARCHY, INTERLEVEL PASSES
ARE SUSPENDED AND
CURFEW IMPOSED IN
THE BARRIOS FOR THE
DURATION OF THE THREAT...

CRYSTAL, YOU
HAVEN'T SLEPT IN
FOUR NIGHTS...

THE WALKER COLONIES ARE SMOKING RUBBLE... ALL OUR OUTWORLD FORCES WIPED OUT OR IN MUTINY! THAT CYBORG ELITE GUARD WENT DOWN LIKE PLEASURE PALACE BOYS

THESE DATA INDICATE THE ALIEN FORCES KNOW EXACTLY WHERE TO STRIKE IN ORDER TO PARALYZE BASE COMMUNICATIONS.

"THREE ESCAPED WALKER MINERS DESCRIBED A LOATHESOME SLUG CREATURE INGESTING ENTIRE BASES; HOWEVER TERMINALLY PSYCHOTIC HIERARCHY PILOTS REPORTED SWARMS OF LOCUST LIKE CREATURES SEIZING CONTROL OF THEIR MINDS..."

THERE IS SOME DISPUTE ABOUT THE NUMBER AND NATURE OF THE ENEMY, HOWEVER

THEY HAVEN'T FOUGHT ANYTHING BUT STARVING PEDS OR CRAZED RADIATION DEFECTIVES FOR OVER A CENTURY.

MANDATORY EVACUATION OF LEVELS 000 THROUGH TOWER D IS PROCEEDING PEACEFULLY...

ALERT!! ALERT!! FIRST EARTH STRIKE GROUND ZERO IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

CENTROBURO CENTRAL ROME IS BURNING, CENTROBANK ZURICH HAS FALLEN.

ISSUE ORDERS TO LOWER COMMAND POST TO BUNKER LEVEL AND ADMIT REFUGEES.

CRYSTAL!! CAN'T YOU DO SOMETHING? WHAT IN THE NAME OF ROME IS HAPPENING?

YOU'LL HAVE TO GO BACK WITH THE OTHER REFUGEES, MADAME...

RADAR DISTURBANCE MOVING WEST ACROSS THE ATLANTIC.

SECTORS ONE AND TWO MALFUNCTIONING.

SECTOR 3W FUN CITY IS DOWN-THE TOWER BUBBLES ARE BURSTING LIKE BLISTERS!!

WE'RE GETTING
READOUT FROM AN
ALIEN LIFEFORM
NOW, COMMANDER
NIGHT.

PRIMITIVE PED AUDIO
TRACKS, PRE-PEELIE PORNOGRAPHY
SERIALS, A RECIPE FOR SOMETHING
CALLED BEIJING DUCK...

RUN IT
ON THE BIG
SCREEN.

WHAT IS
THIS TERRIBLE
THING?!

YOU MUST
TRY TO
NEGOTIATE
WITH IT.

CRYSTAL NIGHT!
CRYSTAL NIGHT!

IT'S CALLING
FOR YOU!

THIS IS MINISTER
CRYSTAL NIGHT OF
CITY SECTOR 4-
I READ YOU,
I READ YOU!!

IT WILL BE OUR
PROMISE TO GO FREE
OURSELVES ONE DAY...

CRYSTAL NIGHT
CRYSTAL
NIGHT

I READ YOU-
WE'RE READY
TO COME TO
TERMS...

WHY WON'T
IT ANSWER
ME, NILS?

WE'RE NOT RECEIVING
FROM ANY STATIONS
EAST OF SALT
LAKE, NOW.

IT JUST KEEPS
ON REPLAYING
SACRED
BETAMAX SCROLLS.

COMMUNICATIONS
OUTAGE NORTH
OF SANTA CRUZ.

CRYSTAL NIGHT

I'M GOING OUT TO TRY TO
COMMUNICATE WITH IT.
CLEAR ME A TUBEWAY FROM
BUNKER LEVEL...

I'LL PREPARE
TRANSIT AND
FORTIFICATION.



CRYSTAL NIGHT CRYSTAL NIGHT

AT LAST WE MEET AGAIN!
DO YOU RECALL OUR ACQUAINTANCE
NOW? WHEN I WAS BUT A
HELPLESS PUP YOU CAPTURED
AND CAGED ME!

YOU HAVE GONE
TO GREAT LENGTHS TO
FIND ME AND
DESTROY ME.

ONCE I ACHIEVED
BUDDING AND REJOINED
MY ILLUSTRIOUS MOTHERS,
I RESOLVED TO FIND YOU,
AND SET UP CULTURAL
EXCHANGE BETWEEN OUR
TWO RACES...
I COME IN **PEACE!**

DESTROY YOU?!?
NEVER! ACCORDING
TO THE WAYS OF MY
PHYLA, IT IS MY DUTY
TO HONOR YOU. HAD
YOU NOT NOURISHED ME
AND SET ME FREE TO SEEK MY
ANCESTORS, I WOULD HAVE
PERISHED AS A MINDLESS
ZYGOTE IN THE
MARTIAN DESERT.

IN **PEACE!**? YOU'VE
LEVELED THE CENTROMART AND
REDUCED MOST OF THE
CITY TO SMOKING KIBBLE!

AMONG THE RUINS
NOBLE CARTEL HIERARCHS
ARE FIGHTING OVER SLEEPING
MATS IN THE BUNKER SHELTERS,
TUBE-FED ARISTO VIRGINS
ARE HUNTING FOR SCRAPS OF
FOOD OR FUEL WITH
PACKS OF MUTES AND
UNEMPLOYABLES!!

BUT I MUST
REMINDE YOU—
WHAT ONE LIFE
FORM CONSIDERS
"LOATHESOME"
OR "HORRIFYING"
IS NOT NECESSARILY
UNDESIRABLE
TO ANOTHER...

I **DO** OFFER THE BENEFITS
OF **UNBELIEVABLY ADVANCED**
GALACTIC FELLOWSHIP, TOURISM,
TRADE, EXOTIC ENTERTAINMENTS, CURES
FOR SOCIAL ILLS, MIRACLES OF
TECHNOLOGY—THE WHOLE BAG
OF TRICKS. AND
THERE IS THE
POSSIBILITY OF
LUXURY HOTEL
CONSTRUCTION...

I FEAR MY
YOUTHFUL CLUMSINESS
HAS MADE AN
AWKWARD
IMPRESSION...

BUT, IF YOU PREFER, I
AM EMPOWERED TO REPAIR
ALL DAMAGES BY RETURNING
YOUR PLANET AND ITS
POSSESSIONS TO A
CONTINUUM OUTSIDE
MY JURISDICTION...
ALL COULD BE
RESTORED AS BEFORE —
YOU WOULD NOT EVEN
REMEMBER MY VISIT.

ALL COULD
BE RESTORED
AS BEFORE...

BLACK TOWERS RISING ABOVE POISON
FUMES, PEDS FIGHTING FOR SPOTS IN
THAT DEATH LOTTERY, CHILDREN MAIMED
IN SENILE ARISTO'S PRIVATE FUN PALACES...
OR WE CAN JOIN YOUR FEDERATION.

HOW
CAN I BELIEVE
YOU?!!

TAKE IT
OR LEAVE IT...

ATTENTION CENTROBURO
HIGH COMMAND — ALIEN
SUES FOR PEACE
AND OFFERS GUARANTEES
AND REPARATIONS IN
RETURN FOR CARTEL
TREATY MEETINGS—
AUTHORITY
COMMANDER
CRYSTAL
NIGHT.

I JUST HOPE YOUR
ORGANIZATION IS AN
IMPROVEMENT
ON CENTROBURO...

MY SECTOR CHIEFS WILL
TRANSMIT THE ALLIED DECISION
AS SOON AS THEY CAN GET
THROUGH TO THE SURVIVING
BURGS IN CAIRO, TOKYO
AND MANILA.

WHILE WE WAIT, LET US WATCH
THE SUNRISE AND I'LL PLAY YOU
BACK A LITTLE MISSISSIPPI JOHN
HURT I PICKED UP IN A TRADE
WITH VIRUS SMUGGLERS
BEYOND ALPHA CENTURI...

IT'S A RATHER NICE
VIEW, WITH THOSE
UGLY TOWERS DOWN...

THE BROKEN GLASS
SPARKLES LIKE ALL
THE STARS IN SPACE...

THE LEGEND OF CRYSTAL NIGHT

AND THAT IS THE STORY
YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S GRANDMOTHER
ALWAYS TOLD — HOW CRYSTAL
NIGHT AND HER ALIEN FRIEND
BROUGHT DOWN THE TOWERS
OF THE EVIL ARISTOS.

AND THEN WE
JOINED THE GREAT
INTERGALACTIC
FEDERATION, AND
EVERYONE HAD ENOUGH
TO EAT AND NO MORE
PRISONS OR ANYTHING?



NO ONE KNOWS
FOR SURE,
BUT IT WASN'T
EXACTLY
LIKE THAT...

IN FACT, I CAN'T
RECALL A SINGLE
OTHER STORY
ABOUT THE
ALIEN FEDERATION...

BUT I GUESS THINGS ARE
A LOT BETTER NOW THAN
IN THE DAYS OF THE ARISTOS.

LOOK, HERE COMES
PA WITH THE ALGAE
BLOCKS FROM
THE RIVER!!

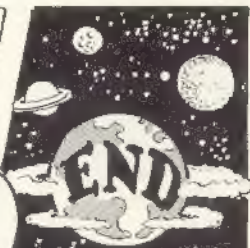


TIME TO GET TO WORK
HELPING YOUR MA, NOW,
BEFORE YOUR BROTHERS
GET BACK FROM
THE FIELDS...

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE SEEN THE
LAST OF THE TWO-HEADED
FISH, MA — SEEMS LIKE THE
WATERS PRETTY NEARLY
CLEANED UP AROUND
HERE.

MY VEGETABLES ARE
COMING UP FINE TOO, BUT
I'M WORRIED ABOUT
THOSE HERDERS
FROM THE VALLEY—
THERE'S
TALK
OF A NEW
BORDER FIGHT.

BUT PROMISE
TOMORROW
YOU'LL TELL
ME ANOTHER
STORY!



CREDITS FOR
INSPIRATION ~
TO EMILE ZOLA,
PHILIP K. DICK,
LOYAL PUBLISHER
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AND
THE PROFESSIONAL
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Sir Real's

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